

Summary of advisory report *Lisbon at local level*

The Lisbon Strategy is the European Union's plan to turn its member states into dynamic, knowledge-driven economies, the foundation for Europe's future prosperity. It is in that context that the Dutch Cabinet has asked the Social and Economic Council to consider the following question: "What contribution can the 31 cities covered by our urban policy make to attaining the Lisbon targets?" According to the Council, the Netherlands' largest cities have an important role to play in the Lisbon Strategy. They must do their best to achieve the ideal of a complete and robust city, one that offers its people, enterprises and institutions a high-quality living and working environment with satisfactory amenities and opportunities for recreation.

The Council believes that the urban policy should focus on tackling stubborn, complex problems in specific neighbourhoods while exploiting opportunities that – because they lie beyond the means of individual cities – require an extra effort on the part of the national government. Cities that are reasonably capable of tackling their own problems, without the additional involvement of the national government, must themselves have the financial means necessary to do so. Those cities that require an extra effort on the part of the national government should set their own priorities. The national and local governments should then enter into a partnership based on a charter that links the city's performance to the national government's reciprocal performance in a specific transaction. Collaboration is also necessary within the cities themselves. Housing corporations, businesses, educational institutions and research organisations should make a more active contribution to solving the persistent, complex problems facing disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Translated by: Balance Texts and Translations, Maastricht